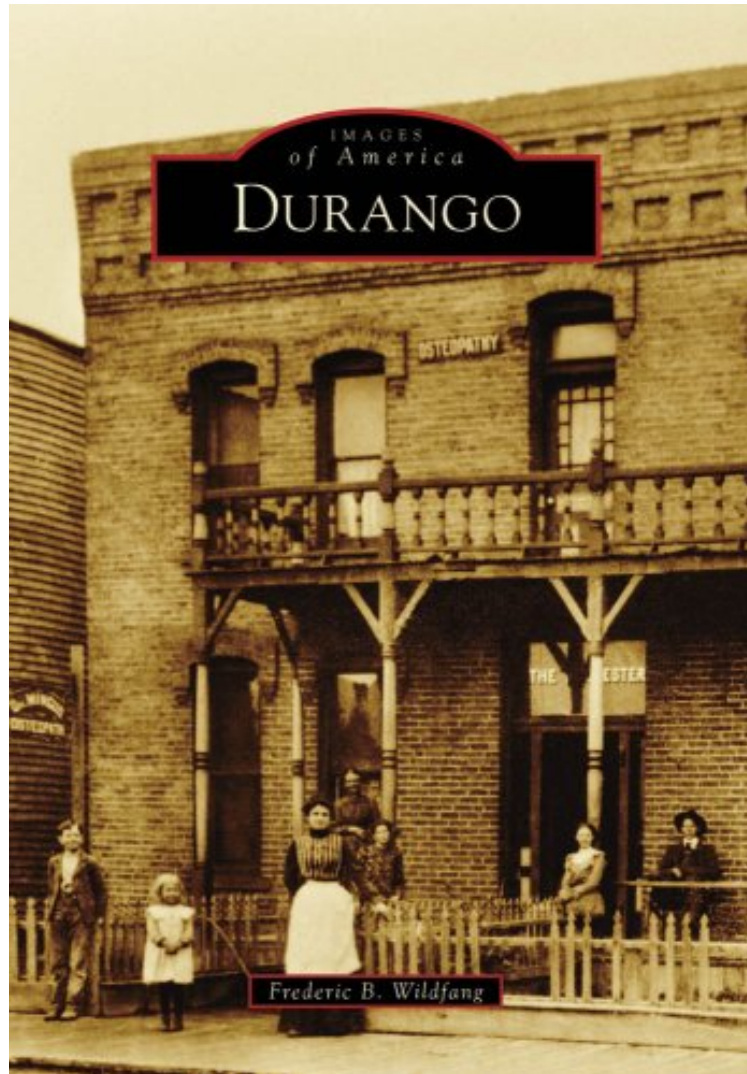


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Frederic B. Wildfang

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Frederic B. Wildfang : Durango, CO (IMG) (Images of America) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Durango, CO (IMG) (Images of America):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed the book very muchBy Rosanna WoodYes, I enjoyed the book very much. I live near Durango, and Ignacio, CO, so was surprised to see all the movies made in Durango. Also, a friend of mine, Christine was co-author of the book.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book about the history of Durango, ColoradoBy JackieI found this book to be loaded with great historical photos of the Durango, Colorado area. It is well documented and a great read!

The storied town of Durango is situated on the farmlands of the Ancestral Puebloans, which later became the hunting grounds for the Southern Utes, in the Animas River Valley of southwestern Colorado. Founded in 1880 as the headquarters of the Silverton branch of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, Durango became the supply depot for gold and silver mines up and down the Western Slope. One of the few old-time cowboy towns in Colorado that retains the vibrancy of a self-supporting downtown of hotels, restaurants, and retail businesses, Durango has worked actively to restore and remodel historic buildings. Enhanced by stories of Spanish explorers, miners, settlers, early entrepreneurs, and the desperadoes of Western lore as well as Hollywood myth, Durango has earned a reputation as one of the Rocky Mountains favorite travel destinations.

Title: Historic snaps: Local author prepares visual record of Durango
Author: Patricia Miller
Publisher: The Durango Herald
Date: 2/3/2009
Veteran Durango author Frederic B. Wildfang has published a visual history of our town, *Images of Durango*. As the title suggests, the focus of the book is its 197 historic, black-and-white photographs. Text is confined to substantial captions, forward matter and an introduction to each of eight chapters in 127 pages. The pictures come from the Library of Congress, Denver Public Library, the Center of Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College, the La Plata County and San Juan historical societies and private collections. The book is part of Arcadia Publishing's *Images of America* series. Wildfang also has written volumes on Prescott, Ariz., and Lake Havasu City, Ariz., for the series. That's in addition to *Mundo of the Mundane: From Journals 1959-1984*, *La Plata: Tri-cultural Traditions in the Upper San Juan Basin* and *Hollywood of the Rockies*. He includes a chapter on filmmaking around Durango in the current book. The book is aimed at the general reader rather than the academic, so there's no bibliography or index. Wildfang works his sources into the text. The ones he's consulted most are *The Durango Herald*, local historian Duane Smith and former Southern Ute Tribal Councilor and Chief Tribal Judge Pearl Casias. The brief, sensibly written text is filled with spurts of information that were new to me. Wildfang starts with the ancestral Puebloans and the Utes in a chapter that has the book's most striking photographs. He quotes Casias, saying Ute women formed the front line of offense and defense on the battlefield. They marched in front of the warriors carrying shields that were two or three thicknesses of animal skins. As for the explorers and settlers, Wildfang charts their progress from Silverton to Baker's Bridge or Animas City (I) and on to 32nd Street or Animas City (II). He moves to the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, explaining why the tracks were narrow gauge (3 feet 6 inches wide) rather than standard (4 feet 8 inches wide). It was because the railroad ran through the inaccessible mountains. Laying track was pricey, too. Putting it through the Animas Gorge reportedly cost \$1,000 a foot in 1882. This is largely a boy's history, chronicling the doings of men. Women mainly feature only as wives and mothers. One admirable exception was Caroline Westcott Romney, who brought the first newspaper, the *Durango Record*, to town in 1880. She ran her business from a tent on East Second Avenue. Wildfang briefly describes natural disasters such as the flood of October 1911 that wiped out almost 100 bridges and crimes like the gunfight between the editors of the *Democrat* and the *Herald* in April 1922 in broad daylight on Main Avenue. His earlier research on film in Durango has put him in a position to find amusing stories, many attributed to Mary Loos. She remembered filming a Western that employed a couple hundred Navajos as extras. The director offered \$50 to anyone who fell off his horse, but the horsemen replied, "We are Navajos. We don't fall off horses." The director reminded them they were playing Apaches, and immediately the extras raced toward the cameras and fell off. Wildfang finishes with historic rehabilitation of Durango buildings. His last chapter is devoted to the handsome restoration of the Rochester Hotel and Leland House by his wife, Diane Wildfang, and her son Kirk Komick. Clearly, their work has played a significant part in Durango restoration, but it is odd for an author to devote such a significant part of his book, 10 pages and 19 photographs, to his family business. About the Author
The vintage images for this evocative window on Durango's past were gathered from the Library of Congress, Denver Public Library, Center of Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College, La Plata County Historical Society, San Juan Historical Society, and private collections. Author Frederic B. Wildfang's works include the *Images of America* volumes *Lake Havasu City* and *Prescott* and the poetry collection *The Mundo of the Mundane*.